MASTER PLAN BY E.E.C.

2348. SHRI KARISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Europeon Economic Community have recently formulated a master plan forthe promotion of Indian exports to Europe with the Indian Government;

(b) if so, by when the master plan is likely to be implemented; and

(c) to what extent the medium and small enterprises in India are likely to be benefited ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

EXPORT OF PSEUDO BASMATI RICE

2349. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have cautioned the concerned authorities for pseudo-basmati varieties from export to protect the quality of Indian basmati and its adverse defects in the export market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMERS AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) and (b) Over the years, Indian basmati rice has acquired a distinctive image for itself in the international market. Government has been advising the trade and governmental agencies that this image should be cultivated and be not allowed to be adversely affected through sale or propagation of any non-basmati varieties as basmati.

INDIA RECEIVING POWER FROM BHUTAN

2350. SHRIMATI ILA PANDA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India is receiving power from Bhutan under a bilateral trade agreement and if so, at what price ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that because of the subsidised cost of power, Bhutan has set up power intensive industries, such as ferro alloys with a view to dumping such products into India, thus affecting Indian business ; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to stop dumping by Bhutan, and whether measures like anti-dumping duty will be introduced to offer a level playing field to Indian investors who have invested heavily in such industries ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Power is supplied by the Royal Government of Bhutan at 37 paise Kwh. under the agreement regarding the Chukha Hydro-Electric Project in Bhutan.

(b) A joint venture company namely M/s. Bhutan Ferro Alloys Ltd., was established in 1990 for the manufacture of Ferro Alloys (Ferro Silicon) and their bye products such as micro silicon and slag. As per the prospectus, the Company has three partners namely the Royal Government of Bhutan, M/s. Tashi Commercial Corp. of Bhutan and M/s. Marubeni Corp. of Japan. The Company has signed a distributorship agreement with Marubeni Corpn. for the export of 50% of silicon and micro silica production to Japan and other countries for a period of 12 years. The Government of Bhutan has agreed to provide power at the same rate at which it is sold to the Government of India for a period of 12 years.

It is, therefore, not true that the Royal Government of Bhutan is implementing this project to dump the product into India.

(c) Does not arise.

INDO-PAK TRADE RELATIONS

2351. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : (a) whether it is fact that Pakistan sees benefiets of increased trading with India :

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto ;

(c) what is Government strategy for trading with Pakistan in future with details thereof ; and

(d) what are the items of exports and imports that would be involved in such a mutual trading and what volume of trade in terms of rupee is being envisaged by Government in between the two countries ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) Pakistan imports from India are restricted to Government of Pakistan's list of 570 items importable from India. However, in September, 1993, Government of Pakistan allowed import of 300,000 tonnes of cement from the private sector on a one time basis from India. Cement is not allowed in Government of Pakistan's list of 570 items approved for import from India. Government of India has been reiterating to have reciprocal status of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) from Govt. of Pakistan to the Indian Exporters in accordance with their obligations under GATT but no favourable response has been received so far. Both India and Pakistan are signatories to the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). The Agreement, envisaged as a first step towards higher levels of trade and economic cooperation in the region, is limited to merchandise trade. The process of obtaining information on items of export interest by the contracting parties to SAPTA is underway. No such list has been received from Pakistan as yet. No target for bilateral trade has been fixed.

MULTINATIONAL COMPANY COMMITTING "GENE PIRACY"

2352. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a multinational company. W. R. Grace is trying to take control of the 'neem' trees natural properties and committing an act of "gene piracy" if so, details thereof ;

(b) whether it is fact that above him named company holds patents in the US for 'Margosam-O' derived from the neem tree and also sold as 'Bioneem'; if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the company is building upon the traditional knowledge of Indian farmers and not rewarding knowledge in any way ; and

(d) if so, what steps Government have taken or is going to take in this respect with details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) The company W.R. Grace is reported to be holding three patents in the USA in respect of neem seed extract and compositions containing neem seed extract. It is not known whether these patents for "Margosam-O" and whether "Margosam-O" is sold as "Bioneem". India has signed the biodiversity convention which provides that the source of the genetic resource shall share in the proceeds of the research done on that resource and in the patent if a given to the results of the research. Further, Government are also in the process of devising legislation for the protection of plant breeders' rights.

QUOTA ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS EXPORTER TO RUSSIA

2353. DR. NUANIHAL SINGH :
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA :
SHRI RAJANI RANJAN SAHU :